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The Worldwide C.I.A. Effort To Sway Attitudes Abroad

Agency Program Spanning 3 Decades Used News Organs to Spread Propaganda

The following article was written by John M. Crewdson and is based on reporting by him and Joseph B. Treaster.

For most of the three decades of its existence, the Central Intelligence Agency has been engaged in an unremitting, though largely unrecognized, effort to shape foreign opinion in support of American policy abroad.

Although until recently the C.I.A. counted a number of American journalists among its paid agents, with a few notable exceptions they do not appear to

team of Times reporters indicated that the C.I.A. actively few of the major American journalists abroad over the past decade emerged a broad picture of the effort to shape news through a far-flung network of organizations that it controls to a greater or lesser degree.

The C.I.A. has refused to provide details of its secret relationships with American and foreign journalists. The news-gathering organizations it employed them, even though they have been brought to an end.

One C.I.A. official said that such relationships were based on promises of "eternal confidentiality" and that the agency would refuse to discuss them "in

But in interviews with Times reporters and former intelligence officials and others, the scope of those relationships emerged. Among the principal ones that emerged were the following:

¶ The C.I.A. has at various times subsidized more than 100 news services, radio stations and other communication facilities in this country but that were used as vehicles for massive propaganda efforts, by its operatives or both. Another dozen foreign-based news organizations, while not financed by the C.I.A., were infiltrated by paid C.I.A. agents.

¶ Nearly a dozen American publishing houses, including some of the most prominent names in the industry, have printed at least a score of the more than 250 English-language books financed or produced by the C.I.A. since the early 1950's, in many cases without being aware of the agency's involvement.

¶ Since the closing days of World War II, more than 30 and perhaps as many as 100 American journalists employed by

C.I.A.: Secret Shaper Of Public Opinion First of a Series

have been part of its extensive propaganda campaign.

Instead, the agency has channeled information and misinformation through a once-substantial network of newspapers, news agencies and other communications entities, most of them based overseas, that it owned, subsidized or otherwise influenced over the years.

The C.I.A.'s propagandizing appears to have contributed to at least some distortion of the news at home as well as abroad, although the amount and nature of misinformation picked up by the American press from overseas is impossible to determine.

Recent attention given the C.I.A.'s involvement with the press has been focused on reports that the agency employed American reporters as agents and numbered others as sources of information or "assets" useful to its operations.

The recurring allegations have led the House Select Committee on Intelligence to schedule hearings on the matter, beginning Tuesday, and prompted The New York Times to survey the C.I.A.'s relationships with American news organizations.

While the three-month inquiry by a

Continued on Page 12, Column 1

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1 of 7